



Date: June 6, 2005
For more information, call Pat Fosse, 406-683-8039

BLM to Assess Land Health in Sage Creek Watershed

BLM's Dillon Field Office will complete a watershed assessment this summer to analyze public land health within the Sage Creek watershed in southwestern Montana.

BLM will review five rangeland health standards in making the assessment, said Pat Fosse, supervisory rangeland management specialist in the Dillon Field Office. The standards include maintaining properly functioning upland and riparian areas, assuring that water quality and air quality meet state standards, and providing for biodiversity. Forest health, hazardous fuels and conifer expansion issues are included in the standards.

"We'll review the standards on an allotment by allotment basis," said Fosse. "If we find the standards aren't met in places, we'll identify the contributing factors and make recommendations for corrective action. The motivation behind the assessment is to help ensure that public lands are healthy and functioning as they should be."

A National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document will be written to analyze alternatives for revised management where resource concerns are found within the Sage Creek watershed.

The assessment and NEPA document will be completed by an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists from the Dillon Field Office, in cooperation with the permittees/lessees, other agencies and the public. After reviewing the assessment report, the "Determination of Standards" will be made by Tim Bozorth, the Dillon Field Office manager. The assessment process will be completed this field season and a report will be released to the public in December. The Environmental Assessment will be prepared next winter.

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Pending interest, BLM will host a one-day field trip this fall for interested people, groups and agencies.

“We hope that interested individuals and organizations participate in the assessment by providing data, information and comments,” Fosse said. “We rely on them to help us improve the process.”

If you would like to know more about the process or have information that may be helpful to BLM, please call 406-683-2337, or e-mail BLM at [MT Dillon FO@blm.gov](mailto:MT_Dillon_FO@blm.gov)

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